

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 06459 011452Z

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4186

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: GH, PINT, PINS

SUBJECT: COUP PLOTTERS TRIAL CONTINUES

REF: ACCRA 6031

1. SUMMARY: GHANA'S LATEST SUBVERSION TRIAL CONTINUES IN ACCRA. ALL DEFENDANTS HIRED COUNSEL. PROSECUTION IS USING WITNESSES TO ESTABLISH MOTIVE FOR PLANNED COUP AND TO SHOW THAT DEFENDANTS ACTIVELY ATTEMPTED TO RECRUIT OTHERS INTO PLOT. A PROSECUTION WITNESS TESTIFIED BRIG. A.K. KATTAH WAS SUPPLIED MONEY BY THE CIA, BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN MADE OF THIS CHARGE YET. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER INITIALLY REFUSING TO COOPERATE, CAPT. J.S.K. VON BACKUSTEIN AND CAPT. J.K. SOWU, BOTH RETIRED, AGREED TO BE REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL, BUT STATED THEY WERE PARTICIPATING IN THE TRIAL UNDER PROTEST. (SGT. J.K. AGOAH AND W.O. II CHARLES WORMENOR, THE OTHER DEFENDANTS, AGREED EARLIER TO BE REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL.) PROSECUTION THEN BEGAN PRESENTING ITS CASE, I.E., THAT SOWU AND VON BACKUSTEIN WERE LEADERS OF THE PLANNED COUP AND WERE MOTIVATED BY DISGRUNTLEMENT OVER BEING RETIRED FROM MILITARY INSTEAD OF BEING GIVEN JOBS COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE 1972 COUP.

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PAGE 02 ACCRA 06459 011452Z

3. PROSECUTION HAS PRODUCED SEVERAL WITNESSES, AND JUDGING FROM THE LAST TRIAL WILL PRODUCE STILL MORE, WHO CLAIM THEY WERE ASKED TO JOIN IN THE COUP PLOT BY ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE DEFENDANTS. PROSECUTION ALSO INTRODUCED A COPY OF SPEECH THAT WAS TO BE READ TO THE NATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE COUP AND A CHART OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, ("ARMED FORCES REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL"), TO BE SET UP AFTER THE COUP (VON BACKUSTEIN WAS TO BE PRESIDENT AND SOWU WAS VICE-PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL). A PROSECUTION WITNESS SAID DOCUMENTS WERE IN VON BACKUSTEIN'S HANDWRITING.

4. PROSECUTION HAS ALLUDED TO FACT THAT ALL DEFENDANTS ARE EWES. ONE WITNESS SAID THAT WHEN HE WAS WITH SEVERAL OF THE DEFENDANTS THEY BEGAN SPEAKING EWE, A LANGUAGE THE WITNESS COULD NOT UNDERSTAND, AND THE CHIEF PROSECUTOR MENTIONED THAT VON BACKUSTEIN BELONGS TO A RELIGIOUS CULT BASED IN THE EASTERN REGION, AN EWE STRONGHOLD. THIS IS SURPRISING AS THE GOVERNMENT IS LOATHE TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ANY ONE TRIBE IN GHANA IS SINGLED OUT FOR ANYTHING, PARTICULARLY THE EWES, WHO ARE AT THE HEART OF THE SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IN THE VOLTA REGION. DURING THE LAST SUBVERSION TRIAL, NO MENTION WAS MADE THAT ALL THE DEFENDANTS WERE EWES.

5. IN TESTIMONY GIVEN AUGUST 30, A PROSECUTION WITNESS STATED CAPT. SOWU HAD TOLD HIM BRIG. KATTAH, IMPLICATED IN THE LAST SUBVERSION TRIAL, "HAD BROUGHT MONEY FROM THE CIA INTO THE COUNTRY AND HAD USED THAT MONEY TO ESTABLISH A STORE IN LOME AND AN OFFICE AT TESANO, ACCRA, AND THAT HE (SOWU) KNEW KATTAH HAD A GROUP." THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT CIA WAS FINANCING KATTAH'S COUP PLOT. SURPRISINGLY, THE GHANAIA PAPER HAVE LET THIS REMARK GO BY WITHOUT A SINGLE, BLAZING HEADLINE.  
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## Message Attributes

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